

# Skills for Lifelong Learning, Earning, and Living

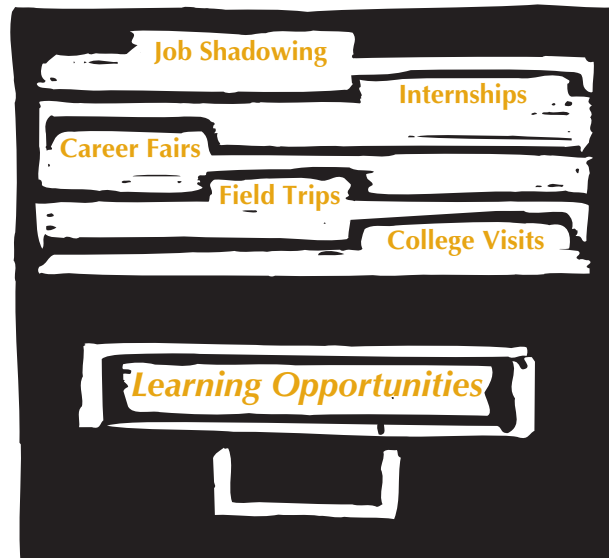
We can all agree that a primary goal of education is to provide students with the knowledge and skills to prepare them for lifelong learning, earning, and living. But, how can we ensure that this goal is met?

A partnership between the Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska School Counseling Association, and Nebraska Career Education has resulted in the development of a model designed to prepare all students for the transition from high school to the adult world. In other words, it is designed to teach students the skills for lifelong learning, earning, and living.

The new Nebraska Career Education (NCE) Career Fields/Clusters Model groups occupations under the following six "Career Fields":

- Environmental and Agricultural Systems
- Communication and Information Systems
- Industrial, Manufacturing, and Engineering Systems
- Health Sciences
- Human Services and Resources
- Business, Marketing, and Management

The NCE model provides for a continuum of activities, career information, and learning experiences to expose students to the opportunities available in the



six Career Fields. The intent is to help students realize the direct link between the education they get in school and their ability to succeed in life.

The NCE model spans all students at all ages.

- Beginning in elementary school, students are to be provided with information to increase their awareness of careers.
- Middle school students are to be provided with up-to-date information about careers and given opportunities to explore a broad range of careers.
- High school students are to be assisted in preparing for careers by designing their course of study to ensure that they meet the graduation and postsecondary requirements for their career choices.

At all levels, *extended learning* opportunities are necessary to bring relevance and real-world context to the curriculum. *Extended learning* provides "hands-on" experiences for students, including activities such as field trips, career fairs, college visits, job shadowing, and internships.

A critical piece of the model is the development of a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) for each student. The PLP provides a framework for setting personal goals, including:

## Learning Goals

- A plan of study for meeting:
- Graduation Requirements
  - Career Cluster Goals
  - Postsecondary Requirements

## Earning Goals

- Personal Interests, Aptitudes, Abilities
- Financial Resources for Education/Training

## Living Goals

- Family and Leisure Time
- Work Environment
- Independence
- Geographic Location

You may be wondering what this means for students with disabilities. As you can see, many components of this model are closely aligned with those of transition planning. This allows for a certain amount of consistency in what is provided for all students.

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## A Student's Story

### Simple Advice... continued

(Continued from page 1)

Before graduating from high school, Nate decided that he wanted to attend the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL). Some of his decision was based on the fact that it is close to home and that it is easy to get around on the campus. However, once the decision was made, there were still details to sort out.

In his junior year of high school, Nate met with Veva Cheney, Director of Services for Students with Disabilities at UNL. As a student with a disability, Nate knew that it was important to connect early with the campus disability services office in order to receive the accommodations he needs.

Veva assisted Nate in lining up the accommodations he would need to attend UNL. His accommodations include accessible housing and classrooms, note takers, accessible transportation, use of a computer for communication, and accommodations for testing. Nate's testing accommodations include extended time for taking exams, a separate testing area, and use of a computer for short answer and essay exams.

In addition to working with students, college disability services offices often assist faculty members in meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Veva recalls that, at first, she had calls from faculty with concerns about meeting Nate's communication needs. However, it wasn't long before she had a call from a professor

who said that he appreciated having Nate in class because he would laugh at jokes when no one else seemed to be paying attention!

Veva reports that Nate often stops in at her office and keeps everyone entertained with his sense of humor. There's no doubt that she looks forward to his visits, as she describes him as a "hard working college student who is a joy to work with."

Nate's daily routine as a college student is a busy one. He lives in an apartment on campus where he receives home health services four times a day to assist him with eating, dressing, bathing, and cleaning. When not in class or studying, he enjoys listening to music, chatting online and taking walks in his wheelchair.

Nate has enjoyed business classes since high school and currently his

major is Marketing. Julie, his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, will continue to monitor his progress and will link him with job placement services when the time comes to find employment.

Meanwhile, it's obvious that Julie enjoys her time working with Nate. She says, "Working with charismatic, determined, and hard working people like him is what makes this job so rewarding!" Now, that's quite a compliment.

*Information regarding preparing for college may be found in "Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities", a publication of the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. To view or receive copies, go to <http://ed.gov/ocr/transition.html> or call toll free at 1-800-872-5327.*

## Connections: A Look at Resources

### Your Subscription to "Making it Work"

It's hard for us to believe, but the first issue of "Making It Work" was published four years ago in September 2002. During this time, we have been working hard to ensure that this publication reaches people who are interested in transition planning for students with disabilities. In order to do this and keep our information current, we want to hear from you.

Please notify us if you:

- Received a copy of this from someone else and would like to have your own subscription.
- Wish to receive this publication via e-mail.
- Wish to be removed from the mailing list.

Contact Sandy Ham at Vocational Rehabilitation with your request by e-mail at [sandy.ham@vr.ne.gov](mailto:sandy.ham@vr.ne.gov) or by calling her toll free at 1-877-637-3422 (in Lincoln at 471-0941).

## FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT

# Skills for Lifelong Learning *continued*

(Continued from page 2)

It is anticipated that students with disabilities will benefit from the increased focus on and activities related to planning for the future. An additional benefit may be that some of the needs of students with disabilities may be met by the “regular” activities and processes, as opposed to those that may have previously only been available within Special Education programs. It is not intended that these would replace Special Education services, but rather could serve as a supplement or as an alternative choice for students.

This article only begins to scratch the surface on the scope of Nebraska Career Education. Future issues of this publication will discuss the model in greater detail, including information regarding:

- Skills for Learning, Earning, and Living
- Personal Learning Plans
- Extended Learning Opportunities
- Career Fields
- Postsecondary Programs and Training Related to Career Clusters

You may also find information regarding NCE on the web at: [www.nde.state.ne.us/nce](http://www.nde.state.ne.us/nce). Keep in mind that this is a work in progress, with schools just now

developing plans for how they will incorporate the model. We look forward to this exciting development for students, families, and educators in Nebraska.

### About this Publication

This publication, produced by Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation, is intended for students with disabilities and their families. The next issue, Volume #21, is scheduled for distribution in December 2006.

Please contact us if you:

- Would like additional copies of this publication.
- Have questions or would like more details about any of the information contained in this issue.
- Have a success story you'd like to share with us.
- Have suggestions for topics for future issues.

To view previous issues of this or other Vocational

Rehabilitation publications, or to receive a free subscription to these publications, go to: <http://www.vocrehab.state.ne.us/vr/newsstand.htm>. You may also contact the Vocational Rehabilitation State Office toll free at 1-877-NE-REHAB (1-877-637-3422) to receive these publications.

### Additional Resources

If you have questions or concerns about services from Vocational Rehabilitation or are looking for additional disability resources, contact the Hotline for Disability Services/Client Assistance Program at 1-800-742-7594 or in Lincoln at 402-471-0801 or e-mail [victoria.rasmussen@cap.ne.gov](mailto:victoria.rasmussen@cap.ne.gov)

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## Students Planning for Success

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

# Making It Work

Department of Education

### A Student's Story

## Simple Advice

Nate Schulte's advice to high school students is simple. Do good in school; keep up with your homework; have fun; remember that grades are important, not which club you are in; and start planning for college by January of your junior year. Based upon the success Nate is experiencing in college, he must have followed his own advice!

Nate was an active student at Omaha Benson, taking a variety of business classes, participating in Student Council and DECA, and serving as a class officer his senior year.

He also worked at Goodwill and Easter Seals during high school. He started early to plan for his future, receiving assistance and information from Vocational Rehabilitation regarding career planning, disability awareness, Social Security benefits, and postsecondary education.

Nate has cerebral palsy, resulting in limited mobility and communication. While he can walk short distances, he uses a power wheelchair for most activities. A communication device helps him to communicate with others. These limitations, however, are quickly overshadowed by Nate's strengths. His Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Julie Johnson, notes that he is “very bright and compassionate. He is always very eager to participate in new experiences and has a wonderful sense of humor.”

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### Connections: A Look at Resources

## All About Transition

Want to know more about transition? Here's a great resource for you. The Nebraska Department of Education has a website devoted entirely to the topic of transition for students with disabilities. The site is designed to provide information and resources for assisting students with disabilities as they prepare to transition from high school to adult life.

The transition website has recently been updated and provides information on topics such as: Transition Requirements, Adult Agency Services, Post-Secondary Education, Transition Publications, Frequently Asked Questions, and much more. Links are provided to a variety of resources, including many that are specific to Nebraska.

Check it out now at:

<http://sites.esu9.org:8080/NDEtransition/>

Nate Schulte

